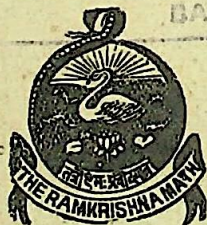
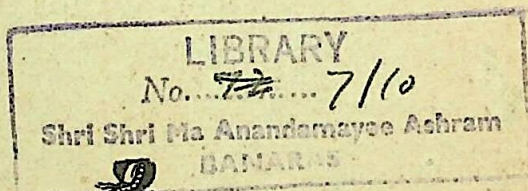


7/10

HANUMAN THE HEROIC IDEAL OF HINDUSTAN

PRESENTED

BY
SWAMI MAITHILYANANDA



SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH
Wari, Dacca, Bengal

Hanuman, as years have rolled on, has attained godhead and is being worshipped all over Hindustan even to-day, not as a legendary being but as a veritable god on whom heroes and devotees of every description depend for inspiration as the fountainhead of strength, heroism, self-control, self-sacrifice and burning love for God.

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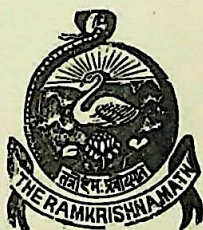
THE HEROIC IDEAL OF HINDUSTAN

BY
SWAMI MAITHILYANANDA

7/10

"It is supposed that if there be any historical foundation for the legend of the Ramayana, this name of Hanuman may refer to the chieftain of some strong aboriginal tribe. In any case, he stands to-day for all that is great in discipleship. Filled with the worship of Rama, he brings to his service the unquestioning obedience of a child and the genius of a man."

—Sister Nivedita



SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH
Wari, Dacca, Bengal

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PRESENTED

PREFACE

Swami Vivekananda insisted long ago that the youths of our country should be imbued with the qualities like continence, self-sacrifice, heroism, and devotion—so prominent in the character of Shri Hanuman. A series of articles was, therefore, attempted under the caption of Hanuman, the heroic ideal of Hindustan and appeared in the *Morning Star*, Vol. IV, Nos. 21 to 30 in 1929, published by Shri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Patna. It was written on the basis of Valmiki's Ramayana, and facts were culled to meet the taste of the modern times. Shri Hanuman was delineated as the heroic ideal of Ancient India in various aspects of his career as a councillor, a minister, a general, an ambassador and a soldier. Side by side, his moral and spiritual excellences were pointed out as they were revealed in the course of the events of his life.

Of late, some friends came forward to bring out the series in book form, thinking that the subject is suited to the times and its usefulness may be appreciably increased by publicity. I am indebted to Messrs. BRINDABON DHAR & SONS, LTD., publishers, for sparing no pains in doing all that is necessary for the publication.

My special thanks are due to my friend, Dr. S. N. Roy, M.A., Ph. D. (London), Head of the Department of English, Dacca University, who has been kind enough to

make a survey of the whole manuscript and go through the proofs very carefully.

It is hoped that this little book will bring to Young India the inspiring message of an ancient ideal put in a new garb.

Shri Ramakrishna Math,
Dacca.
The 23rd Dec., 1945.

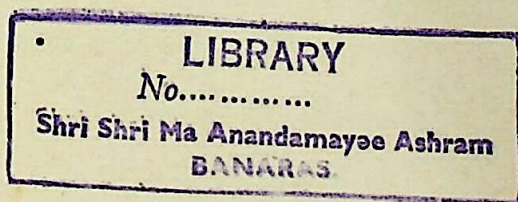
} SWAMI MATTHILYANANDA

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समर्पणम्

नित्यां शुद्धां निरञ्जनां
रामाभिन्नां महेश्वरीम् ।
मातरं मैथिलीं वन्दे
गुणग्रामां रमारमाम् ॥

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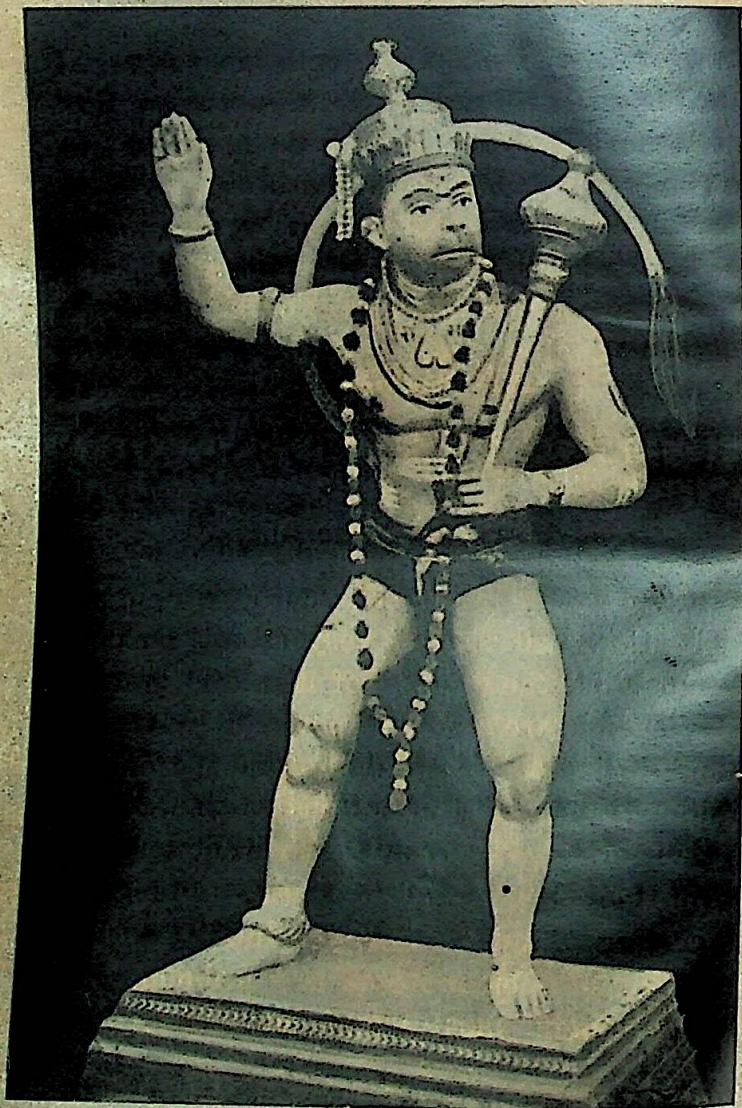


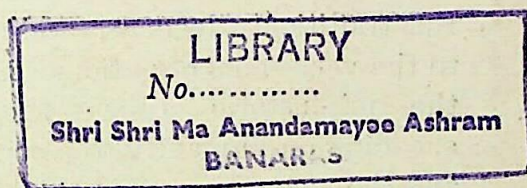
“महावीरेर चरित्रकेइ तोदेर एखन आदर्श कर्ते हवे ।
देखना, रामेर आज्ञाय सागर डिक्रिये चले गेल ! जीवन-मरणे
दृक्पात नेइ—महाजितेन्द्रिय, महाबुद्धिमान् ! दास्यभावेर
ऐ महा आदर्श तोदेर जीवन गठन कर्ते हवे । ऐरूप हइलेइ
अन्यान्य भावेर स्फुरण काले आपना आपनि हये यावे ।”

—स्वामी विवेकानन्द

“You must now make the character of Mahavira your ideal. Look, he crossed the ocean at the command of Rama !—regardless of life and death—the very embodiment of self-control and wisdom ! You must mould your life with this great model of service before you ! If you can do that, other virtues will manifest themselves in course of time.”

—Swami Vivekananda





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THE HEROIC IDEAL OF HINDUSTAN

Mythology & Nationality

If history be a potent factor of human civilization and serve a very useful purpose in moulding the destiny of mankind, myths and legends are a no less powerful system of human thought in swaying and shaping its mind. If histories of nations be traced back to their original sources, they will be found to have their beginning in myths and legends of certain kinds. Ancient India, ancient Greece, and ancient Rome are pre-eminently rich in their vast stores of myths and

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legends. Philosophy, refined poetry, arts and sciences—all these are the ripened fruits of national evolution and advancement. But traditions, legends, and myths yield sap to the very roots of national existence. From the pre-historic times they have been shedding on humanity the sun-beam of truth and the moonshine of imagination, emerging out of the vast and tangled jungle of earth-roving gods, nymphs, demons and the countless forms of man's myth-making mind.

From the earliest states of human society, they have been, in many cases, rolling as floating beacons on the surging waves of human activity. The legendary tales and fabulous stories have been emitting rays of eternal truth from the deep mists of allegorical and hyperbolical representation of thoughts and things. In fact, human progress owes a great deal to the myths and legends of the nations.

Legends are reminiscences of momentous events, handed down from generation to

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generation by oral tradition. In course of time they are clothed in popular poetry and ballads where the highest imagination has a free-play. Legends have some historical foundations behind, whereas myths are fictitious stories intended as vehicles of some ideas. A celebrated historian observes :—

“But when one awakes to a practical view, he recognises of course that all this is an illusion. Reason tells him that this was a mythical age, simply because the people were not sufficiently civilised to make permanent historical records. To the people themselves, these fables and traditions bore, for a long time at any rate, a stamp of veritable truth. Even the most extravagant of their narratives of gods and godlike heroes were believed as implicitly, no doubt, by the major part of the people even at a comparatively late historical period, as we to-day believe the stories of an Alexander, a Caesar, or a Napoleon. As time went on, these fables became even more intimately fixed in the annals of the people, through

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becoming embalmed in the verses of the poet and the lines of the tragedian. Here and there, to be sure, there was a man who questioned the authenticity of these tales as recitals of fact, but we may well believe that the generality of people, even of the most cultured class, preferred throughout the entire period of antiquity to accept the myths at their face value.”*

Scepticism and the scientific spirit of man declined to accept them from time to time ; still they are so much linked up with the thoughts, dreams, and religious instincts of individual nations that they could not be consigned to the dust of time. Even the most refined and rational minds never ventured to disown the peculiar sanctity that myths and legends add to the annals of nations. Even the glaring rationality of the modern civilization can hardly underrate their value and dismiss them as sheer nonsense.

* *Historians' History of the World*, Vol. V, Page 97.

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Over and above the question of sanctity that myths and legends carry with them in the literatures of nations, there are other points of abiding interest about them that can do a lasting good to the evolution of the human mind. They are of immense value, as revealing to posterity the essential features of a national mind in the earliest epochs of civilizations. The stages of evolution that the national mind passes through from generation to generation are clearly recorded in the pages of national myths and legends. Moreover, legends and popular ballads are often built upon historical facts although distorted by the creative imagination and exaggerated by the accompaniment of fiction. These remnants of actual events are no small treasures to enrich the national history. Besides, mythology is a part of every religion, inasmuch as it concretises philosophy. Mythology makes concrete the abstractions of philosophy, and reflects them in the lives of men, supernatural beings and so forth. While lecturing in the West, Swami

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Vivekananda once pointed out, "One fact I must tell you. It is good for you to remember, in this country especially, that the world's great spiritual giants have all been produced only by those religious sects which have been in possession of very rich mythology and ritual. All sects that have attempted to worship God without any form or ceremony, have crushed without mercy everything that is beautiful and sublime in religion. Their religion is a fanaticism, at best, a dry thing."

Heroes of all nations will bear witness to the fact that the mythologies with all their defects and drawbacks inspired their youthful dreams and aspirations. It is Homer's Iliad and Odyssey that roused the lions in young Alexander and Napoleon. So long as the world endures, heroes of all ages and climes will find inspiration in the exploits of Perseus, the labours of Hercules, the feats of Theseus and the glorious accounts of Achilles, Ulysses and Agamemnon of the Trojan War. Similarly, the heroic deeds

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of a Horatius, Coriolanus' career of conquest, the march of Cincinnatus on Mount Algidus—these and other Roman legends can never go in vain ; rather they will continue, as ever, to enliven the hearts of the generations to come.

To enjoy mythologies, one must possess and develop a love of imagery and beautiful poetry. It is utterly useless to approach myths and legends with the spirit of exactitude of history or the ratiocination of logic. Without marring the beauties and the pictorial quality of mythology, let one take them as they are, and mark the good effect they produce on the mind. If a man cannot approach mythology in this way, it will be difficult for him to reach the accounts of the prophets or the contents of the scriptures which are regarded as veritable truths. The feeding of the five thousand with two loaves will not be less incredible to him than the exploits of Perseus or the labours of Hercules.

Now, if we once turn our eyes to Ancient India, we are struck dumb with the wonderful

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richness of her mythological literature. Not to speak of Indian philosophy, literature, arts and sciences, the Indian nation cannot die, so long as its mythologies alone live. Valmiki and Vyasa are two mighty geniuses whom the world has yet to appreciate more fully. The immortal pens that wrote the lines of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are unsurpassed in the records of history. As epics they are unparalleled. The mighty and majestic characters that are depicted in them will dazzle mankind for all time to come. They portray an ideal civilization. They represent the Indian ideals of morality, social life, and religion. In them Indian thoughts, manners and customs, politics and economics are presented in their true perspectives. As such, they are not to be abandoned as mythical and legendary tales, but in them the world is to see, as if in a mirror, the proper images of Indian life in all its aspects.

In these great epics we find the multitudinous ideals of a king, a citizen, a hero, a

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father, a son, a mother, and a wife and so on. In them are given the standards and living examples of the noblest virtues of man, namely, truthfulness, charity, heroism, chastity, faithfulness, devotion and a number of the like. In these days of national turmoil, when Indian traditions are set at naught and the Indian ideals of life are trembling in the balance, it is worth our while to go back once more to the palmy days of these epics and see whether we can find anything to serve the needs and demands of modern India. The greater is the urgency of such a quest to-day when a living consciousness of nationality is dawning upon the children of India after centuries of foreign subjugation.

It is high time that the ideal of an Indian national hero should be set forth before the eyes of the true lovers of India. It is true that times and circumstances have almost diametrically changed. It is certain nevertheless that whatever may be the time and circumstances, the ideal should never be lost sight of. To overlook the ideals of life

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is one of the prime causes of Indian national degeneration. Problems and circumstances have to be tackled and dealt with in accordance with the needs of the age.

In these pages, we shall try to put Hanuman as the heroic ideal of Ancient India, not exactly in the manner in which it has been depicted in the Ramayana, but in the way in which we can make the best use of the Ideal of Hanuman in the present age.

The Conception of Heroism

In these days when India is shorn of heroism, the talk about an Indian hero, or the Indian conception of heroism may sound ridiculous to many. But as we intend to set forth the ideal of a typical Indian hero, it will not be out of place to begin by dwelling at length upon the primary conception of a hero as represented in Indian literature and handed down to us through tradition. Modern students of History may laugh away the idea altogether. But the traditions of a nation are more powerful than its subsequent history.

The land that gave birth to the cult of Shakti can never be thought to have possessed no idea of the inherent prowess or heroism of man. The brain that could realise the marvellous conception of Shakti with the ten Mahavidyas, could hardly be lacking in any heroic conception.

The nation that could produce or picture an ideal king like Rama, a hero like Hanuman, a chaste lady like Sita, and a

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devoted brother like Lakshmana, together with the parallel characters of Ravana and his fold, must have imbibed the manly virtues of chivalry, heroism, valour, and the like. The country that could make or dream of an ideal civilization in which were found a galaxy of mighty and majestic characters like Krishna, the five Pandavas, Bhishma, Karna, Drona, and brilliant women like Gandhari, Kunti and Draupadi together with an array of formidable opponents like Duryodhana and his people, cannot, in the least, be wanting in heroic potentialities.

It is in the literature of such a nation that a mythical goddess shows her chivalry by thus addressing her enemies in the loftiest strain :

यो मां जयति संग्रामे
 यो मे दर्पं व्यपोहति ।
 यो मे प्रतिबलो लोके,
 स मे भर्ता भविष्यति ॥

i. e., "Whoever can vanquish me in the strife, whoever can humble my pride,

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whoever can stand as my equal, I would choose him as my husband."

It is in the philosophical treatise of such a nation that a hero is exhorted to fight a righteous cause in accents such as these :

क्लैव्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्स्वय्युपपद्यते ।

क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥

i. e., "Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Prithâ ! It does not befit you. Cast off your mean faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of enemies !"

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।

तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥

i. e., "Dying you gain heaven, or by conquering you enjoy the earth. Therefore, O son of Kunti, arise resolved to fight."

तस्मात्स्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व ।

जित्वा शत्रून् भुङ्क्ष्व राज्ञं समृद्धम् ॥

i. e., "Therefore do arise and obtain fame, vanquish your enemies and enjoy the vast dominion."

However, if we make a psychological

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analysis of Indian heroic minds, we at once come to know that the Indian conception of a hero is different from those of other countries of the world. The type of an Indian hero is distinct from that of ancient Greece and Rome, the fountain-head of European heroism. The Indian ideal is again at a great remove from that of a modern hero. The difference in culture has created a wide gulf between the heroes of India and those of Europe. European culture rests more upon materialism, and so its heroism is more associated with the physical and intellectual capacities of man. Love of power, lust for dominion, and at best, an insatiable thirst for fame desecrated the sacred temples of Heroism in Greece, Rome, and modern European countries. At the same time, it would be only right to say that European heroism has carried in its train many glorious things that mankind can justly be proud of. And for them, all credit is due to Ancient Greece. Swami Vivekananda said, "The Greek lives entirely

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in this world. He does not care to dream. Even his poetry is practical. His gods and goddesses are not only human beings, but intensely human, with all human passions and feelings almost the same as with any of us. He loves what is beautiful, but, mind you, it is always external nature ; the beauty of the hills, of the snows, of the flowers ; the beauty of forms and of figures ; the beauty in the human face, and more often, in the human form—that is what the Greeks liked. And the Greeks being the teachers of all subsequent Europeanism, the voice of Europe is Greek.”

Next to the Greeks, modern European Heroism is indebted to the Romans who were the first teachers of Western politics, military science, art of colonisation and foreign conquest. Of course, the burning sense of patriotism that inspires European heroes to stand for their hearth and home is the most glorious aspect of their heroism. But when that patriotism is, as in most cases, contaminated by greed, this noblest

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of virtues is rendered into the vilest of vices. This is why an unselfish and truly heroic mind often fails to appreciate the marvellous chivalry of the so-called great heroes of the western world.

But if we probe into the secrets of the great Indian heroes, we at once find that the basis of their heroism lies in something other than love of power, love of beauty, or love of honour. It is their deep regard for the all-conquering truth. The culture with which their minds are imbued yields a keen insight for the discovery of a truth or the righteousness of a cause. A truth or a righteous cause rouses their innate divinity and makes them fearless even unto a victorious defeat in a heroic struggle. This is the general impetus that urges a true Indian hero to his heroic deeds. Not to speak of the epic heroes, even during the Mahomedan rule of India, there were at least a few brave spirits who kept up the standard and ideal of Indian heroism. The names of Rana Pratap, Ahalya Bai and

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Rani of Jhansi are glowing examples of Indian heroism. India has always given the sword a place under the footstools of Learning and Dharma. The duty of protecting men and cattle was assigned to the sword. But it was never allowed to trespass, it was never given the power of going beyond its limits. Dharma was the master of the sword and it was used only when the master required. This is why a Rama was necessary to kill a Ravana, and a Krishna to destroy a materialistic civilization. This is why the conceptions of destructive gods and goddesses still reign supreme over the Hindu India. The modern world has yet to learn under the heaviest penalty the lesson that what is gained by the sword is lost by itself, but what is gained by the spirit can never die.

If one reads the works of Hindu Polity such as *Sukra.Niti*, *Kamandaka Nitisara*, or the *Santi Parvan* of the Mahavarata, one will find that even the kings, ministers and commanders of armies had very strict moral

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injunctions to obey. Not only that ; it was imperative even for a king to have complete mastery over his senses and adhere to Dharma. Unfair means and methods were strictly forbidden. The government was to be carried on in such a manner as to do full justice to Dharma and extirpate Adharma. War was not a greedy or an ambitious affair but enjoined upon people as a religious duty. Under such healthy conditions, the spirit of heroism could be kept up in all its purity. Heroes were then truly heroes and worshipped as gods.

Authenticity of Hanuman

The events of the Ramayana are so much wrapped up in the veil of antiquity that historians have discarded them as mythical. Some hold that the story of Rama and Sita (born of the furrow) is a pure allegory, representing agriculture introduced into the Southern regions of India by the race of the Kosalas. Others regard Rama's exploits as a symbol and observe that it represents the course of the sun. But these views have been refuted by eminent critics. It is held with great plausibility by a strong consensus of scholarly opinion that a great event, namely, the conquest of Southern India and Ceylon by the Northern kings living in the Gangetic valley, brought about as a consequence the conversion of the non-Aryan tribes to the Aryan religion as far as Ceylon. We quote below a portion of Gorrizio's borrowed preface, printed in the notes to Griffith's *Ramayana* :

"Towards the Southern extremity and in the island of Lanka (Ceylon) there existed

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undoubtedly a black and ferocious race averse to the Aryans and hostile to their modes of worship, their ramification extended through the islands of the Archipelago, and some traces of them remain in Java to this day. The Sanskrit Indians attained in their traditions the real character of the race; they attributed to it physical and moral qualities not found in human nature; they transformed it into a race of giants, represented it as monstrous, hideous, translucent, changing forms at will, blood-thirsty and ravenous, just as the Semites represented the races that opposed them as impious, horrible and of monstrous size."

But so far as the authenticity of Hanuman is concerned, we find in the Ramayana that a species of beings called *Vanaras* inhabited the great kingdom of Kishkindhya. According to some, they were a peculiar tribe of men, and it is unanimously held that they were far more powerful than ordinary men. Sister Nivedita observes that if there be any historical foundation for the legend of the

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Ramayana, the name of Hanuman may refer to the chieftain of some strong aboriginal tribe.

However, it is idle to expect any satisfactory historical background of the events that took place in hoary antiquity. But the Hindus whose firm belief is founded upon the traditions of countless generations have been adoring and worshipping through ages the heroes of the Ramayana more truly and faithfully than even any historical heroes and personages. If we leave aside the supernatural phenomena and exaggerations of the poetic mind, we find in the events of the Ramayana, a tangible, real, and uptodate trend of thought and course of things. With all divine adjuncts ascribed to Rama, he still seems to be a king, real and historical. He never appears to us as a king possible only in some imaginary golden age. In a similar way, Hanuman with all his exaggerated strength and superhuman powers appeals to men of every age as a hero, natural and sincere, in the catastrophe of a royal

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household, or in a critical epoch in a nation's history when war is found to be the only remedy and a necessary evil.

This is why it has been rightly spoken of the Indian epics; "What Philosophy by itself could never have done for the humble, what the laws of Manu have done only in some small measure for the few, that the epics have done through unnumbered ages and are doing still for all classes alike. They are the perpetual Hinduisers, for they are the ideal embodiments of that form of life, that conception of conduct of which laws and theories can give but the briefest abstract, yet, towards which the hope and effort of every Hindu child must be directed".*

* Sister Nivedita—*The Web of Indian Life*.

Advent of Hanuman

This planet of ours beheld the advent of Hanuman when the world awaited a complete civilization, and Hindustan heralded the coming of a new era. Ancient sages could read the omens portending momentous events. Side by side with this a civilization flourished and reached its zenith of materialism in the golden city of Lanka (ceylon). The city rolled in wealth and luxury. Ravana, the King, was the very embodiment of lust, vanity, and cruelty. He subdued all, and irresistible was his prowess. His kith and kin began to rob the Aryans of their women and children they killed the Brahmanas and disturbed holy men in their worship. They were violently hostile to the Aryans and could not tolerate their forms of worship. They were adepts in black magic and sorcery and attained many supernatural powers. Enjoyment of life was to them the only religion.

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In the society in which Hanuman was born, moral ties were slackened, and the ethical standard was levelled to the ground. The rulers were ease-loving, tyrannical, and sadly given to the pleasures of the senses. Even a brother made no scruple to covet the wife of a brother. Manly virtues gave place to rowdism and high-handedness. Atheism was rampant and simple faith rare. Scepticism prevailed everywhere.

At that time the Aryan civilization tried to dominate over all the existing creeds and religions. It made its way like a huge Gangetic flood, carrying everything before it. But who would carry the banner to the distant South? Who could lead the campaign against Ravana, the mighty conqueror? Who would punish the wicked and vindicate the righteous cause of the virtuous? Sages and pious men made fervent appeals to the Lord. Rama, the son of Dasaratha, appeared on the earth and met the afflicted men and sages. He took up their cause in right earnest with

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his brother, Lakshmana. He sacrificed the glories of a sovereign and at his father's command embraced a long exile in the forest of Dandaka—with his beloved wife, Sita. Ravana, the wicked king stole away Sita, and a great commotion spread throughout the length and breadth of Hindustan. Rama became mad, and his whole being was stirred up to avenge the wrong. He immediately started to search for Sita. Many hills and dales he passed, many streams and rivers. But who could help him in such a plight? Who would restore Sita to him? These cares and anxieties made him all the more serious for the cause. He lamented and wandered from place to place while words of solace were spoken by Lakshmana. At last they came up to a hill, called Rishyamukh, where Sugriva, the deposed king of Kishkindhya, was holding his council with his ministers.

Sugriva, whose throne was usurped by his brother, Vali, saw two heroic-looking men—Rama and Lakshmana coming armed

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with bows and arrows. He suspected their beggarly dress and took them to be emissaries of Vali. Sugriva therefore summoned his cabinet, the ancient type of which we find as described by Manu :—

मौलान् शास्त्रविदः शूरान् लब्धलक्ष्यान् कुलोद्भवान् ।

सचिवान् सप्त चाष्टौ वा कुर्वीत सुपरिचितान् ॥

तैः सार्द्धं चिन्तयेन्नित्यं सामान्यं सन्धिविग्रहम् ।

स्थानं समुदयं गुप्तिं लब्धप्रशमनानि च ॥

i. e. The cabinet may be made up of seven or eight ministers who are brought up in the service of a king for generations versed in scriptures, chivalrous, of noble lineage and skilled in the use of missiles. A king ought to consult with them on the questions of war, peace, finance, and many other problems of the government. In another place, Manu says :

व्यवहारान् दिदृक्षुस्तु ब्राह्मणेः सह पार्थिवः ।

मन्दत्रैर्मन्त्रिभिश्चैव विनीतः प्रविशेत् सभाम् ॥

i. e. A king should enter into his council with a modest attitude in the company of

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Brahmins, proficient in scriptures and the ministers, efficient in politics.

Accordingly, Sugriva's council sat. The King expressed his great suspicion and alarm at the advent of the two foreign warriors, likely to be Vali's spies.

A Councillor

As a councillor, Hanuman's position was very high. He rose and tried to convince the council of the futility of such consternation and explained the situation by the force of his arguments showing a rare insight into the enemy's ways and means. Hanuman was an outspoken councillor. He remarked outright that such unusual restlessness on the part of the council betrayed a foolish impulse of fear. The council fully appreciated the infallibility of Hanuman's speech. And it was unanimously held that Hanuman should be sent as an ambassador to the heroic strangers.

Hanuman forthwith obeyed the mandate of the council. He approached Rama and Lakshmana in disguise and met them with utmost humility and due courtesy. He addressed the heroes in sweet and gentle terms and put questions as to the reasons of their coming there.

An Orator

His speech, wedded to reason, was clothed in such fitting language and diction that it readily captivated the heart of Rama. The effect of his speech could be well imagined from the words that came from the mouth of Rama himself as a correct estimate of Hanuman's gift of oratory. Rama said to Lakshmana :

"The *Vanara* is a hero and an orator. Please talk with him in a sweet and affectionate manner. The style in which he made his speech amply proves that he has already mastered the three Vedas, namely, the Rik, the Yajus and the Saman. He seems to be proficient in the science of language. You must have noticed that he did not utter a single inappropriate word. As he delivered his speech, no fault could be detected in his gesture and posture. How brief, simple, and sweet were the words he uttered ! He spoke in a middle pitch of voice, Articulation and accentuation were very

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distinct and clear. There was a perfect sequence of thoughts. Thoughts and words could easily picture the things they aimed at. Such a speech is really miraculous and can sway even the minds of enemies whose swords are ready to strike ! Such a speech is so delightful ! I cannot imagine how a king can carry on his government without the help of such an ambassador. In fact, a man of such rare calibre can accomplish many difficult things by the sheer force of his eloquence."

Rama and Lakshmana were very much pleased to offer their friendship to Sugriva and agreed to help him in regaining his lost kingdom.

A Practical Philosopher

Hanuman was not only versed in the Vedas and the then existing schools of philosophy but he led the life of a practical philosopher. The moral ideal of his life was very high. He observed perfect continence throughout life. As we notice him through the multifarious events of his career, we find in him an apostle of absolute purity and an advocate of stubborn renunciation. He fully realised the evanescence of this world with all its paraphernalia. Although he was involved in the affairs of the State, he conducted them solely for the sake of duty. These could never taint his naturally pure spirit, and he could readily detach himself from their onslaught.

Rama, true to his promise, killed Vali and enabled Sugriva to regain his lost kingdom. Vali's wife, Tara, was beside herself with grief at the death of her dear husband. She disconsolately bewailed her loss and hot tears

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trickled down her cheeks over the deceased Vali, lying by. She could not be consoled by any means.

Hanuman, came to alleviate the sufferings of such a sorely stricken heart. He began to console her in the following strain as would amply instance his profound philosophic bent of mind :

“O Queen ! men reap after death the fruits of their good or bad actions. You yourself are greatly grieved ; but tell me, whom you are grieving for. You yourself seem to be so pitiable, pray, whom then do you pity ? This human body is exactly as an image reflected in water. Is it not in vain to mourn a human body ? Here is your son Angada, standing near. Please do look after him. It is now meet for you, O Queen, to think of your duty at your husband's demise. In such a calamity, it is up to you to attend to auspicious things. Please do no more kill time by mourning.”

The highly conscientious being that Hanuman was, he at once suggested to Tara

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that her son, Angada, be duly installed in the throne of his father. Hanuman was himself perfectly immune from ambition, nor could he tolerate that a wrong should be perpetrated within the range of his conscience.

A Prime Minister

When Sugriva regained his kingdom, Hanuman became his Prime Minister. As minister, he stands as a model, and we find in him the virtues which should adorn every minister of a good government. The Mahabharata sets forth the standard of an ideal minister :—

कृतज्ञं प्राज्ञमक्षुद्रं हृदभक्तिं जितेन्द्रियं ।

धर्मनित्यं स्थितं नीत्यां सन्निधौ पूजयेन्नृपः ॥

i. e., A king should adore a minister who is grateful, wise, noble, loyal, master of the senses, pious and well-versed in politics.

When Sugriva came to Kiskindhya, Hanuman thought it wise to visit Rama. After paying due homage to him, he expressed a profound sense of gratitude on behalf of the King. He said that it was but through Rama's favour and prowess that Sugriva could inherit his vast ancestral dominions. And he added that it would have been next to impossible for Sugriva

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himself to accomplish the object. He requested Rama to gladden them all by his gracious presence at the coronation of Sugriva.

Rama could not join the ceremony for he had promised not to enter any village or town until he had literally obeyed the paternal mandate. However, it was settled that as the rains had set in and it was not possible to march to war, before the ensuing autumn Sugriva should make all preparations for helping Rama in his expedition against Ravana.

Days rolled on. Sugriva passed his life in merriment and his extreme luxuries of kingship. He rested content with frivolous joys and absolutely neglected his duties. He gave the entire charge of the Government to his ministers. He forgot all about his word of honour. Autumn came. Hanuman thought it fit to rouse the King to a strong sense of duty and self-conscious activity. So he convened a meeting of the Cabinet, over which Sugriva was urged to

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preside. Hanuman put the whole question before the King. He explained the duty of an ally. He pleaded eloquently that Rama's cause should be vindicated at my cost. He forecast the far-reaching consequences of breaking alliance with the mighty Rama. He moved that armies be sent to different corners of the earth for finding out a clue to Ravana and the stolen Sita. The motion was unanimously carried. King Sugriva at once ordered his commanders to mobilise their troops.

In a monarchical government where a king is capricious and of a lascivious character, the task of a Prime Minister can well be imagined. We can fairly estimate the merit of Hanuman as Prime Minister. His lofty character, sound judgment, and sincerity of purpose always stood him in good stead ; and above all, his sterling sense of righteousness, coupled with his wonderful intellect, overpowered the King and the Cabinet and won for him uniform successes in his ministerial career. As we closely observe the events of

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Sugriva's reign, it is clear that but for an able minister like Hanuman the whole Cabinet would have been corrupted and the kingdom gone to rack and ruin through the whims and wanton wiles of Sugriva. And lastly, Sugriva would have been a most miserable victim to Rama's wrath, had Hanuman not given him timely warning and good advice.

A General

Sugriva's dilatoriness caused Rama to send Lakshmana to Sugriva immediately and express through him his utter displeasure at Sugriva's conduct. Sugriva, greatly frightened by Lakshmana's words, shook off all his sloth and dullness. He girded up his loins and set about making huge preparations for war.

Sugriva ordered his great General, Hanuman, to recruit *Vanara* soldiers from the mountainous regions of the Himalayas, the Vindhya ranges, and from among the tribes that dwelt in the Kailasha, the Dhabalsikhar, the Mandara and the Mahendra. Hanuman sent commanders to different directions for a speedy mobilisation of troops.

Hanuman himself and able commanders like Shatavali, Sushena, Tara, Raktamukha, Kesari, Gavaksha, Dhumra, Panasa, Nila,

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Gavaya, Gaya, Jambavan, Gandhamadana, Angada and many others started for the purpose, and within a very short time each of them enlisted several millions of trained soldiers. Kishkindhya became full of innumerable troops and looked terrible beyond dream. The huge army, as maddened for war, appeared before Sugriva and Rama, who gave vent to their hearty felicitations on such a supreme occasion. Sugriva took his royal stand before the army with all his paraphernalia of pomp and power. He made a fiery appeal to all the commanders and soldiers for the immediate rescue of Sita and the capture of Ravana. He promised the rank and file together with their commanders ample rewards on their return after a victorious campaign.

Sugriva had once personally travelled over the whole world. He now described to the army in detail the countries, rivers and mountain ranges that would come on the way in different directions. He ordered Shatavali to lead his army towards the

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North, Vinata towards the East, Hanuman and Angada towards the South and Sushena towards the West. Only a month's time was given to them, and failure was threatened with heavy penalty.

Then Sugriva turned his face towards Hanuman, his dearest General, and addressed him thus in terms of great eulogy :

"Hanuman, you are a tested hero. Your chivalry is wonderful. Your valour is unique. The strength of your nerves is irresistible. The intelligence that you possess is extraordinary. You are a past-master in politics. This world has seen no greater General than you. I entirely believe and trust that you can find out Sita and your success is assured."

Rama heard Sugriva's estimate of his great General and was delighted to go forward to meet him. He approached Hanuman and handed to him a ring with his name engraved upon it and said :

"Hero, I give you this ring in order that Sita may clearly understand that you

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are sent by me and that she may without any fear speak with you and send news of herself. Considering your chivalry and sagacity I have hardly any doubt as to the success that awaits you in the enterprise of rescuing Sita." Then Hanuman paid due respects to Sugriva and Rama, and took leave of them amidst the cheers of the teeming battalions around him.

The commanders led their armies to the appointed directions. Days passed plunging Sugriva and Rama in anxiety. The situation was aggravated when a month's time was about to elapse with no hope of success. Vinata returned unsuccessful from the East, so did Shatavali from the North and Sushena from the West. Sugriva, Rama and all waited for Hanuman in tense expectation.

Hanuman, Tara and Angada marched till they came to the Vindhya ranges. There they searched every nook and corner of the caves, forests, rivers, fortresses, hills and dales that lay before them. But all

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their efforts were in vain. They pursued their expedition with untiring zeal till they reached a vast tract of land which, as the tradition ran, had been formerly a large forest. The forest had been cursed by a saint, Kandoo by name, and rendered into a dreary waste land. It was too extensive to be crossed soon. Besides, in that waste land rivers were dried up. Trees stood without bearing any fruit and flower. No birds and beasts could be found there, scarcely any grass and creeper. The reason of the saint's curse was that he had lost a dear little child of ten years in that forest. However, the *Vanaras* left no stone unturned to find Sita even in the numberless hills and caves of that land. Incessant toil without any food and water severely told upon the physical and mental constitutions of the soldiers. They became bitterly fatigued and lost all enthusiasm. Hanuman comforted them with sweet words and made a strong appeal to their sense of loyalty and duty to the King. The army proceeded again with

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new vigour and energy towards the further South.

Hanuman now led the army all over the Vindhya ranges. But the allotted time was over. Angada said that they should all die by hunger-strike since they had failed in carrying out their King's command. A great panic overtook the whole army. The *Vanaras* were ready to die in the wilderness rather than return to Kishkindhya and incur the dreadful displeasure of Sugriva.

The commander, Tara, began to conspire against Sugriva and won Angada over to his side. Angada preached disaffection among the *Vanaras* and rose in open rebellion against the King. In such circumstances, Hanuman tried to create difference of opinion among the soldiers and convinced Angada of his foolishness by his persuasive eloquence. He even intimidated him by saying that he would be a victim to Lakshmana's terrible arrows, if he any more provoked such rebellion in the King's army.

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However, in such a plight, a ray of hope penetrated the gloom of despair when fortunately Sampati happened to meet Hanuman and the rest, and learnt their errand. Sampati was the brother of Jatayu who laid down his life by fighting with Ravana, when he was carrying off Sita. He pointed out to Hanuman the island of Lanka where Ravana reigned. Sampati had attained the supernatural power of clairvoyance to a high degree. He could thus see from there the whereabouts of Sita and Ravana. Hearing all these words the whole army was filled with a new joy and marched on with redoubled energy and vigour.

Sampati said that the island of Lanka was situated far out in the boundless ocean. So at the command of Hanuman, the whole army advanced towards the farthest South till it arrived at the shore of the ocean. The ocean was as boisterous as it was deep. It seemed as vast as the sky itself. Now, a great consternation

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and a dark melancholy were about to overshadow the minds of the army but for Angada who made an inspiring speech with an appeal of hope which enraptured the drooping souls of all.

An Adventurer

The ocean roared. It rolled and danced in a mad fury. Waves dashed on the cliffs. Large aquatic animals were afloat. Mighty gales heralded the coming of a hurricane. Who would venture over it now? This was the query that knocked for a reply at the door of every soldier's heart. Angada summoned the veteran soldiers. The huge army encircled him and all stood expectant. Then Angada proceeded to speak as follows : "Ye veteran soldiers ! Tell me who amongst you can cross the yonder ocean. It extends about one hundred *Yojanas* (i. e. eight hundred miles). Who would keep up the honour of our King? Who can put an end to our worries? I say, who are going to save us from such a great panic? Pray, who would vindicate the cause of Rama who relies so much on us? Soldiers, if you really want to serve the Crown and your country, if you earnestly desire to return home in triumph, do come forward and save this

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perilous situation." The appeal stirred up the hearts like the charge of an electric battery. Hearts could then speak unto hearts without any need of words.

The *Vanara* soldiers were in those days, as a rule, great adepts in jumping long distances. One by one they gave the usual extent of space that each could jump over. Gaya said, "I would leap ten *Yojanas* (i. e. eighty miles) at a stretch." In this way, Gavaksha, Sharava, Rishava, Gandhamadana, Sushena and Jambavan, asserted that they could leap twenty, thirty, forty, seventy, eighty and ninety *Yojanas* respectively. Then Angada said that he could cross the ocean by jumping over one hundred *Yojanas* but he lacked the power sufficient for return. Hanuman was sitting alone without any speech. All eyes now turned towards him. Gandhamadana rose and addressing him before all the soldiers appealed strongly to his heroic self. He eulogised Hanuman and estimated that he was the only hero who could easily cross the ocean and come back

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after a successful campaign. He paid due homage to the versatile genius of Hanuman and referred incidentally to his heroic birth and lineage.

Hanuman was a Yogi of the highest order. He had so much control over his physical body that he could magnify or minimise its size according to necessity. Besides he had a supernatural gift of changing his form into that of any animal. These things might seem quite preposterous in the light of modern science, but treatises on Hindu Yoga Philosophy very lucidly teach methods of attaining and practising such powers which depend mainly on the unlimited power of concentration of which the human mind is capable.

However, Hanuman felt inspired by Gandhamadana's speech and got himself ready for the task imposed upon him by the veteran officers of the army. A tumult of enthusiasm arose among the battalions and all eyes were on Hanuman to see how he would leap the ocean. Hanuman exerted his psychic power

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and increased his body to an enormous size. A lofty place was necessary to bear the reflex motion that the gigantic jump of Hanuman would cause. So he climbed up the Mahendra mountains which stood near, and having reached its summit began to prepare himself for the fierce ordeal. The whole army surrounded him.

Hanuman, just before the start, knelt down with folded palms to pray to the deities he worshipped. Tradition says that he took the holy name of Rama whom he looked upon as God Himself, and who, he believed, had come to the world for the establishment of Dharma and the extirpation of Adharma. The devout prostration at the visualised lotus feet of Rama roused the mighty leviathan sleeping in Hanuman. The magical name of Rama, the only Master and the only Lord he knew in life, enlivened his innermost soul. Hanuman then magnified himself and appeared like a hillock. The peak of the mountain he stood upon seemed to shake under his very weight; trees began to

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shiver to their very roots, and birds and beasts shrieked in violent fear. Beings like *Vidyadharas* and *Rakshasas* that had their abode in the ranges fled away overtaken by a fierce alarm. The *Vanaras* raised a huge uproar of cheers that rent, as it were, the sky itself. Angada, Gandhamadana, Jambavan and the rest beheld with pride and awe the soul-stirring adventure of their dear and brave General. Hanuman forthwith said a few parting words : "Dear commanders and soldiers ! Don't be anxious for me. I will leap up to Lanka as fast as I can. If I don't find Sita there, I will move the very heaven. If I don't find her there either, I will sack the city of Lanka and bring Ravana bound hand and foot." Then the General and the army bade mutual adieus. A moment after, Hanuman leaped forward with all the strength he could command. He flew like the fastest aeroplane. Even gods seemed to watch the unique scene. As he moved forward, two terrible demons, Surasa and Sinhika by name, met him on the

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way one after another and attempted to devour him. He defeated them by dint of his sagacity and valour.

At last Hanuman had a glimpse of the land not very far off and began to minimise his figure so that he might escape the notice of anybody on the coast. The island of Lanka gradually came in view. The city was situated over the ranges called the Trikuta. Hanuman alighted and stepped towards it. He came up to the Trikuta and refreshed himself by the side of beautiful lakes and under the cool shade of beautiful trees which bore fragrant flowers. The natural scenery removed all the fatigue of his body and mind.

He advanced further and arrived at the city of Lanka. It was surrounded by trenches. *Rakshasas* strolled round the city with bows and arrows. Then he could see the golden ramparts inside of which there were magnificent places with very wide roads which were full of flags and golden gates guarded with the weapons *Shataghni* and *Shula*.

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Next, he went to the Northern gate of Lanka which was so high as to reach the very sky. He marked the methods of protecting the gate and also the ocean by its side. The gate appeared to him as invincible as anything. He thought that it would be next to impossible for the *Vanaras* to make their way through it. He doubted even whether Rama himself would be able to break through it.

However, he then began to think of Sita, —where she was, if she was alive, and how he would manage to see her. He turned back and climbed up a peak of the Trikuta where he lost himself in deep musings. He thought out a plan for an interview with Sita. It was clear that it would not be safe for him to enter Lanka in daytime. Accordingly, he waited for night-fall.

Considering the arduous and utterly dangerous nature of his task, he began to say within himself with heavy sighs :

“How should I meet Sita in the absence of the terrible Ravana ? I may die for the

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cause of Rama, but that will not help in the least the rescue of Sita. I must by all means see that my labours of leaping the ocean may not go in vain together with all the subsequent efforts. If I roam in Lanka in my own figure, *Rakshasas* will surely kill me. And if I wander about concealing myself in different forms, even in the form of a *Rakshasa*, still I cannot possibly escape from them. So let me enter the city with an exceedingly minimised body."

Night came. Hanuman shrank to the size of a cat and entered the city with all possible alertness.

An Envoy

It was a moon-lit night. Hanuman proceeded towards Lanka. The pomp of the city was wedded to the silvery beams of the moon. Lanka appeared to Hanuman as a dreamland. Its riches and beauty dazzled his eyes. He stood stock-still. Intently did he look at the palaces, pavilions, pillars and portals. He was struck at the marvels of art they displayed. The streets were wide. The palaces had seven to eight storeys. The floors were set with pieces of gold and crystal. Throughout the city were arched gates made of gold. Variegated were the scenes of Lanka. There were charming gardens with beautiful lakes, the water of which sparkled and was as clear as crystal. By their side, the palaces appeared as white as the clouds of autumn. The sea-breeze always blew gently over the city. Big elephants and armed *Rakshasas* guarded the palaces, the doors of which were golden.

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Flags were flying making a pleasing noise. Peacocks and flamingoes strutted here and there. The music of various instruments was heard all around.

While noticing all these, Hanuman moved on till he halted at the main gate. There he met a *Rakshasi* who, as she said, was the guardian angel of Lanka. She would not allow him to trespass. An exchange of hard words ensued between the two. At last they came to blows. Hanuman vanquished her but spared her life out of mercy for the weaker sex. Then he made a smart leap over the rampart and stole into the heart of the city.

The *Rakshasas* were, as a rule, very much given to luxury and merriment. At night Hanuman found the whole of Lanka enjoying mirth in its fullest swing. In places, he found dancing and musical parties that entertained large numbers of *Rakshasas*. Somewhere the Vedas were being read and the Vedic hymns muttered, whereas in other places the *Rakshasas* were singing the

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praises of Ravana. He saw the spies in varied disguise roaming here and there. The banquet halls were packed up, and *Rakshasas* were busy drinking. There was no restraint in their luxurious living. Immorality ran rampant.

Hanuman searched for Sita in every nook and corner of the city. But his heart began to sink gradually when Sita was found nowhere. However, as he went on, he saw a gorgeous palace with armed guards, riding on horses and elephants. Pearls and jewels glittered on the streets and gates, in the rooms and everywhere. It was evidently the royal palace. Ladies thronged here and there. The atmosphere was surcharged with the vibrations of a sweet music coming from all sides. In some places, *Rakshasas* prepared the *Soma* juice for sacrificial offering. In temples gods were duly adorned and worshipped. Hanuman felt the pomp and power of the place and adapted himself to the circumstances. He boldly entered through the ramparts and began to search

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for Sita in every house and garden. He got into the houses of prominent *Rakshasas*, namely Prahasta, Kumbhakarna, Vibhishana, Indrajit and many more. He marked the amazing riches and luxury therein. "Eat, drink and be merry"—seemed to be the only motto of their life.

Hanuman at last came up to the house where Ravana himself dwelt. He saw the pleasure gardens, groves, picture galleries, parlours, toy mountains and various other royal paraphernalia. Such grandeur could not unnerve him but made him all the more bold to face the fierce ordeal. He walked very cautiously from place to place and sought for Sita. He found the *Pushpaka* chariot which could carry Ravana wherever he pleased to roam in the boundless sky above. It was swifter than the modern aeroplane. It was full of numerous rooms adorned with gems and jewels. It was as high as the peak of a mountain. It was highly romantic in beauty, and Hanuman noted every detail of it with

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close attention. Then he entered into the very bed chamber of Ravana. It was pompous, so full of precious metals, and so artistic that language fails to describe it. It appeared to him as the second heaven, or the very *Amaravati* of Indra. Or was it a hallucination? It almost bewildered him. But he collected himself and moved on in his search for Sita. Ravana was surrounded by a number of beautiful ladies. Hanuman thanked God that Sita was not there. After a careful search he found a lady of exquisite beauty sleeping on a bedstead apart. He mistook her for Sita herself but immediately came to know that she was Mandodari, the queen consort of Ravana. In this way, all the female apartments were searched but Sita could not be found.

Hanuman came back with various misgivings in his mind. A personal question of deep interest tormented him. He was a chaste man in thought and deed. He had never before looked at anybody's wife. He valued chastity above everything. So he

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led a strict *Brahmacharin's* life. Just then he had to see so many wives of Ravana. He paused and was afraid of falling off from his life's ideal. But his analytic brain and the philosophic bent of his mind soon brought him to his senses and he rightly consoled himself as follows :—

“No doubt, I had to see so many women. But I know my heart was pure all the while. It is the mind that leads passions towards virtue or vice. But I am sure, my mind was unruffled all along. Besides, I was pressed by my duty to search for Sita in the midst of her sex. Who ever seeks for a lost woman among men? So I can never incur any sin, as I had to see them from the purest motive.”

In spite of long and continuous wanderings, Hanuman could not discover any clue to Sita. His heart sank in dismay. Terrible anxieties crept into his mind. He sometimes sat down in despair. Sometimes did he remain standing motionless. At times he walked up and down. At times he closed and again

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opened the door of the houses he searched. He inspected the *Chaitya* palace and every other spot he came upon. He shuddered to think that Sita might have shuffled off her mortal coil, finding herself utterly helpless in the midst of the ferocious *Rakshasis*. He sobbed in utter anguish, and most piteous tears trickled down his cheeks. Even a lion-hearted hero could hardly check his feelings at such a moment ! He deplored the futility of his crossing the ocean. He was miserable to think that the time allotted for the rescue of Sita was also over. He could not bear to think what Jambavan and Angada would say to him after such a failure. He resolved to die foregoing food and drink.

But 'hope springs eternal in the human breast'. Hanuman thought it unworthy of him to die in that way. He plucked up courage and chose to die in harness.

He left Ravana's palace and sitting in a lonely spot began to muse again : 'Sampati assured me that Sita was in Lanka. Was he wrong ? Ravana carried off Sita by force.

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Sita was then completely in his power. Did she yield to Ravana? No, it was utterly impossible. Most probably while Ravana was hastening to Lanka for fear of Rama, he might have dropped her on the way. Or it may be that she died out of the womanly fear at the sight of such a boundless ocean. Or perhaps, Sita, tender as she was, breathed her last from the very speed of Ravana's hasty flight and the terrible stranglehold of his arms. Or perhaps she fell down from Ravana's chariot into the ocean. Nay, that mean-hearted Ravana devoured her as he had failed to make her his wife. Or Ravana's wicked wives ate her up as a delicious morsel. Alas! Sita is no more. She died thinking of Rama. Evidently she died with the last words, 'Alas! O Rama! O Lakshmana! O Ayodhya!' on her lips. Or if she is now alive, she is profusely shedding tears like a bird in a cage. If I return to Rama, what shall I say to him? I won't be able to utter any of the expressions—'I did not see Sita: I saw her: or she is dead.' If I say any of these, I

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shall prove myself guilty of having neglected my duties. If I don't say any of them, I shall be more guilty. Alas, what a terrible dilemma ! If I now return to Kishkindhya, what would Sugriva say to me ! What would the *Vanaras* talk of me ! Alas ! what would Rama and Lakshmana say ! If I say to Rama that I have not found Sita, he will die at once. Lakshmana, the devoted brother, will follow the same fate. Then this ill news will reach Bharata and Shatrughna, who would die then and there. The bereavement owing to the loss of these sons will be intolerable to Kousalya, Kaikeyi, and Sumitra, who will surely succumb to death. Sugriva, his wife Ruma, Tara, and Angada, and all the *Vanaras* of Kishkindhya will follow suit.

So the only thing for me to do now is to lead the life of an anchorite. Let me live under the shade of trees. Let me live upon the fruits that would naturally fall from trees down into my hands. Or what is the use of my life at all ? I will prepare a burning pyre

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for myself and let my body be turned into ashes. Voluntary death in water is prescribed by the Rishis. Let me follow that. Alas ! such a glorious leap across the ocean went in vain for want of Sita ! But suicide is a great sin. If a being can preserve his body, he can attain much good. So let me live, and some good might accrue from it still. Yes, let me at first kill Ravana and give him to Rama as a present. So long as I do not find Sita, I will search Lanka over and over again."

With these thoughts, Hanuman began to pace to and fro. Suddenly his eyes fell on the *Ashoka* forest which he suspected to be the place of concealment of Sita. Accordingly he girded up his loins and recalling the holy memory of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita, and Sugriva, proceeded towards the forest. The forest was very neat and clean and full of *Rakshasas*. They were guards keeping watch. Hanuman jumped into the forest without anybody's knowledge.

He was delighted to see the plenty of flower and fruit which used to adorn the

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forest in every season. The natural scenery, the beautiful birds and beasts—all gladdened his heart. He tried to keep himself concealed from notice. There stood a *Shinshapa* tree near by. Its leaves were many and thick with the labyrinth of creepers all around. He at once climbed up the tree, and while sitting there comfortably and safely, began to feast his eyes upon the murmuring streams, lakes, lotuses, cranes, ducks, rows of fine trees, flowery groves and beautiful spots where silver, gold, pearl, and gems were scattered abundantly for the enhancement of the pleasure-garden's beauty.

All on a sudden, Hanuman happened to see a lady. She was surrounded by *Rakshasis* and looked very lean and thin from fasting. She was sighing heavily and weeping. Hanuman at once took her to be Sita herself. He now carefully recalled Sita's ornaments which Rāma had described and found them perfectly similar to those on the person of the lady. Only one ornament that Sita herself had dropped

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on the Rishyamukh mountain was found wanting. The conviction grew doubly sure by the verification. He turned in thought to Rama time and again and adored him with his whole soul. He adored Sita and Lakshmana also at the same time. But the miserable condition of Sita made his heart bleed for the restoration of her honour.

One day and a half passed. Hanuman saw the ferocious *Rakshasis* guarding Sita on the following night. Just before day-break, Ravana came to the forest and began to coerce Sita to marry him. Hanuman marked how Sita, though worn to a shadow, could rule the moral coward by her spirit of chastity. Ravana being disappointed left the place and gave her two months' time to reconsider the matter. Moreover, he threatened to devour her in the event of refusal. Hanuman heard all these and found Sita overtaken by extreme fear and profusely shedding tears. The *Rakshasis* tried to intimidate her with all their ferocity and merciless treatment, but

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without effect. Then after some time, when Hanuman found her alone, he began to relate audibly all the details of Rama's message in colloquial Sanskrit. Sita was thunder-struck to hear them and looked at the *Shinshapa* tree in great alarm. She could not decide whether to believe him or not. Seeing her so much puzzled, Hanuman alighted from the tree, and after paying due respect to her, began to talk in a manner calculated to win her confidence. Then there was a free exchange of words between them, in course of which Hanuman said, "I have come to you at the command of Rama. He is well. He wants news of you. Lakshmana too has tendered to you his best regards."

Sita's joys knew no bounds. But some time after, she doubted that Hanuman might be Ravana in disguise.

The suspicion overwhelmed her and her mental condition grew worse than ever. Hanuman read her thoughts and by his openness and sincerity of heart tried to

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convince her of his integrity of purpose. Sita then came to her senses and asked him all about his acquaintance with Rama. At the answers that Hanuman gave, she was completely reassured. Thereupon Hanuman handed to her the ring presented by Rama himself. Sita was beside herself with joy at the sight of it. She put to him various questions about Rama and Lakshmana. Then Hanuman consoled her by every means and promised to kill Ravana and rescue her. He was then and there ready to carry her away to Rama. But as it was not possible on many grounds, Sita did not approve of it. She then gave her "*Chudamani*" (i. e., a jewel worn on the top of the head) to Hanuman for taking it to Rama and related to him a significant incident that had taken place on the Chitrakuta mountain. The jewel and the narrative would amply evidence Hanuman's meeting with her.

The success of Hanuman as an envoy reminds one of the distinctive traits so

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essential for envoyship, as described in *Kamandaka Nitisara* :

तर्कज्ञितेजः स्मृतिमान् मृदुर्लघुपरिक्रमः ।

क्लेशायाससहो दक्षश्चारः स्यात् प्रतिपत्तिमान् ॥

i. e., "He who can reason well and understand others' sentiments from gestures and postures—who is of a sharp memory, unassuming, capable of moving about swiftly, patient of toils and troubles, very smart, and prompt in tackling dangers and blunders—can verily become an envoy."

A Fighting Ambassador

Before Hanuman would leave Lanka, he wanted to know the military strength and other resources of Ravana so that he might be able to form an idea of the possibilities for the coming war. He regarded this knowledge more necessary than anything else from the political point of view. Here we find in Hanuman a typical ambassador as delineated by Kamandaka :

प्रगल्भः स्मृतिमान् वाग्मी शस्त्रे शास्त्रे च निष्ठितः ।

अभ्यस्तकर्मा नृपतेर्दूतो भवितुमर्हति ॥

i. e., "One who is daring, of good memory, eloquent, versed in the military science, and the holy texts as well, and also well-practised in embassy—deserves to be an ambassador."

In order to seize an opportunity of knowing the military strength of Ravana, Hanuman devised a plan for meeting with the *Rakshasa* heroes. This idea led him to break down the trees of the *Ashoka*

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forest. At this, there arose a great hue and cry among the *Rakshasis*. Hanuman took his seat over the arched gate of the forest and began to magnify his figure enormously. Ravana heard this, and being greatly enraged, sent an army called the *Kimkaras* for the capture of Hanuman. A fierce fight went on between an individual and a troop. But all were killed by Hanuman. Ravana despatched Prahasta's son, Jambumali. In the meantime, Hanuman leaped on to the great *Chaitya* palace of Ravana and completely pulled it down. The whole of Lanka was then thrown into confusion. Jambumali rushed towards Hanuman and was slain in open combat with him. Ravana was utterly dismayed and then ordered the sons of his ministers to march against Hanuman. They all came, but in spite of the terrible arrows they shot at their opponent, all were vanquished and mercilessly killed by huge stones and trees hurled by Hanuman. Thereupon, Ravana sent five able commanders namely; Virupaksha,

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Yupaksha, Durdharsa, Praghasha, and Vashakarna. A dreadful battle ensued. The commanders fought very bravely but at last fell on the battle-field.

After this, the turn came for Prince Aksha who was a mighty hero. He advanced, with his troops following him. At first Aksha invited Hanuman to a fight by shooting three arrows at him. These arrows struck him on the head and torrents of blood flowed from there. Hanuman rushed towards him, dodging his terrible arrows by swiftly moving right and left. Still some arrows pierced the chest of Hanuman who admired the amazing valour of the prince. But instantly he fell upon Aksha and broke his legs and waist. Aksha died. The news came as a death-blow to Ravana. Having composed himself somehow, he asked Indrajit to take up arms. Indrajit was the right match for Hanuman. He met him on the field and began to shoot deadly arrows. Finding them utterly useless, Indrajit used a divine weapon

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called *Brahmastra* which was sanctified by magical formulae and was powerful enough to slay any opponent, however terrible.

The weapon could not kill Hanuman but bound him hand and foot. Then the *Rakshasas* came round him in great numbers and began to molest him by all possible means. Hanuman feigned to succumb to them, and with a view to see Ravana, tolerated all kinds of insults and blows. Hanuman was thus brought by Indrajit before Ravana in council. All curious and astonished eyes fell on Hanuman, and everybody was expectant to know his whereabouts. Ravana asked the ministers to enquire who he was and why he had come to Lanka. Hanuman replied that he was the ambassador of Sugriva, the King of the *Vanaras*, and that he had come to Lanka at his command. At this, Ravana flew into a passion and asked Prahasta to enquire whence he had come and why he had destroyed the *Ashoka* forest and fought with the *Rakshasas*.

Hanuman replied, "O King, I have come

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from Kishkindhya as an ambassador. King Sugriva is an ally of Rama. Rama's wife, Sita, has been stolen by you. Rama demands back his wife and has declared war against you. If you let his wife go, it will be the safer course for you. I came to Lanka to search for Sita and have found her. I wanted to see you as an ambassador, but when I knew that it would be very difficult for me to do so, I destroyed the *Ashoka* forest and invited the *Rakshasas* to fight so that I might be captured and brought to the royal presence."

This bold and straight message of Hanuman inflamed Ravana, and he at once ordered him to be put to death. Vibhishana, Ravana's brother, asked him to graciously withdraw the order, as it was contrary to Dharma and was never sanctioned by any good government to inflict capital punishment on an ambassador. Ravana thought this to be a sound judgment, and accordingly altering the nature of the order, said :

"This *Vanara* tribe has a peculiar tail. Set fire to it, and carrying him on your

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shoulders, roam about the city." Immediately the *Rakshasas* began to roll up his huge tail in rags, and having oiled it, set it on fire. Hanuman was carried all over Lanka, and he seized the opportunity of seeing every nook and corner of the city. When Sita heard about it, she prayed to the fire-god for the safety of Hanuman. Tradition says that it was through the force of Sita's fervent appeal that Hanuman had not to feel the least heat of fire.

All on a sudden, Hanuman by the strength of his sinews tore to pieces the huge rope round his body and leaped on to the lofty main gate of Lanka. He killed the guards there and then wandered from house to house throughout the length and breadth of Lanka. Soon the whole of the city caught fire and there arose in the air great lamentations and screamings from among the *Rakshasas*.

Hanuman came down near the bed of the ocean, and soaking his tail, extinguished the fire. Then it suddenly occurred to him that he had not done well

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by burning the entire city. He was afraid that Sita might have been affected by it. So he came back to the *Shinshapa* tree, and having made obeisance to Sita, anxiously asked about her safety. Then he gave her consolation by sweet parting words and promptly prepared himself for return to Kishkindhya.

Hanuman leaped back over the ocean and arrived at Kishkindhya amidst the cheers of the *Vanaras* under the leadership of Angada and Jambavan. The triumphant army marched with their dear general towards the royal palace of Sugriva. Hanuman paid due respect to Sugriva, Rama, and Lakshmana who were amazed to hear the story of his campaign. Rama received the *Chudamani* as presented by Sita and shed tears of joy. They all praised the great fighting ambassador.

A Hero of the Great War

Having consulted with Hanuman, Rama bridged the vast gulf of the ocean with the help of his *Vanara* soldiers and led his gigantic army to Lanka. War broke out with all its horror of mad fury. Hanuman played his role no less conspicuously even in the din and bustle of such a great war. He killed some of the most formidable enemies like Akampana and Nikumbha; and in his fight with Indrajit he showed amazing skill and valour. In the second fight of Indrajit with the *Vanaras*, the latter were completely vanquished with a heavy loss of soldiers and great commanders. It was Hanuman who, accompanied by Vibhishana, moved as an inspiring angel by the wounded and dead soldiers on the battle-field. At that time, Jambavan who was seriously wounded, asked Vibhishana whether Hanuman was alive. When Vibhishana enquired why he had not, first of all, asked any news of Rama, Lakshmana or Sugriva ;

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Jambavan replied : "Dear Vibhishana, don't you see that if Hanuman is alive, all of us are alive ; but God forbid, if he be killed, all of us, though living, shall remain as dead !"

However, Jambavan on hearing of the abject condition of the army asked Hanuman to bring some medicinal plants from the densest forests of the Himalayas. Hanuman forthwith started out and in right time came back with the plant which saved the lives of innumerable *Vanaras*. On another occasion, Rama's troops passed through a very critical period, after Lakshmana had been mortally wounded by the weapon of Indrajit, and as a consequence, Rama himself and the rest completely despaired of success. Then it was Hanuman again who went to the farthest region of the Himalayas and brought the medicinal herbs which saved the life of Lakshmana and wholly changed the trend of the war.

Then, ultimately when the whole host of the *Rakshasa* heroes and Ravana himself

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had laid down their lives on the field, Rama sent Hanuman to communicate to Sita the news of his victory. Later on, when Rama was coming back home, it was Hanuman who, at the instance of Rama, went to intimate the news of his return to Guhaka and Bharata. Rama returned to Ayodhya, when Bharata renounced his sovereignty and gave him the throne with all deference.

Rama bade adieu to Sugriva, asking him to rule his kingdom of Kishkindhya. He ordered Vibhishana to govern Lanka. But what about Hanuman? He approached Rama, and after making due obeisance to him, imploringly said: "O Lord, Thou art the King of all kings. I know, Thou hast descended to the earth to uphold Dharma and extirpate Adharma. Please do grant me everlasting love to Thee and also that I may live in this world so long as Thy story is told by posterity." Rama warmly embraced Hanuman, expressed his deep sense of gratitude to him for his services, and lastly granted him all he had prayed for.

The Ideal of Hanuman

As we trace the traits of Hanuman's character as reflected in the events and aspects of his life, we find in him the virtues of continence, devotion, heroism, and self-sacrifice, happily blended with other moral and spiritual qualities. All these virtues reached the very acme of development in his personality. He had vehemence and strength of a very robust type but it could never produce convulsion fits to unnerve him, because, side by side, he possessed to a very great degree the calmness of the spirit in difficulty, the first characteristic of true greatness. If we are at one with Carlyle to hold that 'a deep, great, genuine sincerity is the first characteristic of all men in any way heroic,' we have got to proclaim that Hanuman as a Councillor, a Prime Minister, a General, an Ambassador, a Fighter or even as

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a private individual proved himself absolutely sincere in all the various phases of his career and was therefore heroic in every way.

He was the type of the ideal Indian hero. The heroism he was imbued with was completely bereft of personal ambition, and utterly untarnished by the 'last infirmity of noble mind.' And this kind of heroism cannot be expected of an individual who has not mastered his senses. In the case of Hanuman, we find him a thorough master of lust which is the substratum of all other senses.

Besides, since his meeting with Rama, his life took altogether a new course. The personality of Rama acted so much on his soul that he made up his mind to serve him with all his strength. To say in the language of Swami Vivekananda, Hanuman thought that 'to see God in man was the real God-vision.. Not through Nature to Nature's God did the Hindu go, but to man's God through man himself'. This idea entered into the very being of

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Hanuman and he made himself an eternal servant and devotee of Rama, the Lord. He proved so true to his Chosen Ideal that in his after-life he used to proclaim :

श्रीनाथे जानकीनाथे अभेदः परमात्मनि ।

तथापि मम सर्वस्वः रामः कमललोचनः ॥

i. e., "Although there is no distinction between the Lord of Lakshmi and that of Sita, either of them being the very supreme Self ; still Rama of the lotus eyes is my be-all and end-all of life."

Hanuman is regarded as one of the greatest devotees in the religious literature of India. But from the events of his life, we find in him a *Karma-Yogin* also of the highest order, as he never hankered after the fruits of his actions. Also we find in him, a *Raja-Yogin* of the most sublime type, who achieved perfect control over external and internal nature. But then, he was no less a *Jnana-Yogin*. It is said that once Rama, while in his Court, asked Hanuman : "Well, Hanuman, what is your idea about

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me ?” Hanuman immediately answered through his great insight and wisdom :

देहबुद्ध्या दासोऽस्मि ते

जीवबुद्ध्या त्वदंशकः ।

आत्मबुद्ध्या त्वमेवाहं

इति मे निश्चिता मतिः ॥

i. e., “O Lord, when I consider myself as body, I am Thy servant ; when I do so as a *Jiva*, I am Thy part ; and when I am conscious that I am the Self, I become Thyself. This is the idea rooted in my mind.”

By this single verse Hanuman explained and harmonised the three systems of doctrines as propounded in the Vedānta philosophy. Herein Hanuman's idea is evidently this that those three conceptions are not separate from one another, but they are only the grades of God-realisation which every man has to pass through in his journey to the goal of Absolute Truth.

Hanuman illustrates the Indian ideal of a national hero and testifies to the fact that

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there cannot be true heroism unless there is a sound basis of spirituality behind. Hanuman, as years have rolled on, has attained godhead and is being worshipped all over Hindustan even to-day, not as a legendary being but as a veritable god on whom heroes and devotees of every description depend for inspiration as the fountain-head of strength, heroism, self-control, self-sacrifice, and burning love for God.

THE END

